

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 211548Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 837

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBSSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 5731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GE, US

SUBJECT: JEWISH CLAIMS AGAINST GDR: TRAVEL OF BENJAMIN FERENCZ

REF: STATE 112202

SUMMARY.

1. AS SUGGESTED REFTEL, EMBASSY CONTACTED THE COMMITTEE OF ANTI-FASCIST RESISTANCE FIGHTERS ON MAY 18 AND OBTAINED CONFIRMATION THAT THEY HAD RECEIVED A CABLE FROM FERENCZ REGARDING HIS PROPOSED VISIT TO BERLIN AND THAT FERENCZ COULD HAVE AN APPOINTMENT EITHER ON MAY 20 OR 21. FERENCZ TELEPHONED THE EMBASSY MAY 20 TO INFORM US HE HAD ACCEPTED AN APPOINTMENT WITH MR EINNECKE OF THE ANTI-FACIST COMMITTEE FOR THAT AFTERNOON AND THAT HE WOULD COME BY THE EMBASSY AFTERWARD TO DEBRIEF US, WHICH HE DID. END SUMMARY.

2. FERENCZ SAID EINNECKE WAS THE SAME PERSON TO WHOM HE HAD SPOKEN IN JANUARY, 1975, DURING HIS LAST VISIT. FERENCZ' APPROACH THIS TIME WAS ALSO SIMILAR
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TO THAT IN JANUARY IN THAT HE POINTED OUT TO EINNECKE THAT THERE HAVE BEEN "CERTAIN FEELERS" PUT OUT ABOUT

THE POSSIBILITY OF ARRANGING A MEETING BETWEEN DR. GOLDMANN OF THE CONFERENCE OF JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS AND FIRST SECRETARY HONECKER OF THE GDR. FERENCZ SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED THE INDICATION GIVEN BY HONECKER TO AMBASSADOR COOPER DURING AMBASSADOR COOPER'S CALL ON HONECKER IN LATE FEBRUARY THAT HONECKER WOULD BE WILLING TO RECEIVE GOLDMANN FOR A "PRIVATE" TALK. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, FERENCZ REPORTED THAT EINNECKE SUGGESTED THAT GOLDMANN WRITE A LETTER TO HONECKER IN THE LATTER'S CAPACITY AS FIRST SECRETARY OF THE SED RATHER THAN IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY. WHEN PRESSED AS TO THE REASON FOR THIS, EINNECKE SAID IT WAS ONLY A SUGGESTION AND FERENCZ HAD THE IDEA THAT IT MAY HAVE BEEN ONLY EINNECKE'S THOUGHT, RATHER THAN A CAREFULLY CLEARED APPROACH. WHEN FERENCZ ASKED IF GOLDMANN WOULD RECEIVE AN ANSWER TO SUCH A LETTER, EINNECKE SAID HE COULD NOT BE SURE. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION DURING THE MEETING WHICH LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR AND 15 MINUTES, FERENCZ CAME AWAY WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GDR WISHES TO DEAL ONLY WITH CLAIMS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS AT THIS TIME AND THAT THEY ARE ALSO INSISTENT UPON DEALING ON A "NON-GOVERNMENTAL" BASIS.

3. WITH REGARD TO DR. GOLDMANN'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL OF HIS SENDING A LETTER TO HONECKER, FERENCZ SAID HE BELIEVED GOLDMANN WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO DO SO UNLESS HE COULD BE ASSURED IN ADVANCE THAT HIS LETTER WOULD BE ANSWERED. FERENCZ THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT GOLDMANN ALSO WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY IN ACCEPTING THE PROPOSITION THAT HE WAS TO NEGOTIATE ONLY CLAIMS FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS UNLESS IT REPRESENTED A "FIRST STEP" IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR CLAIMS OF ALL JEWISH VICTIMS OF FASCISM. IN THIS CONNECTION, FERENCZ NOTED THAT GOLDMANN HAS A "POLITICAL" PROBLEM IN THAT HE CANNOT PURSUE AMERICAN CLAIMS SOLELY WITHOUT RISKING CIRCUMSPECTION FROM OTHER JEWISH VICTIMS OF FRENCH NATIONALITY, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO HAD SUFFERED JUST AS MUCH AND WERE IN MANY WAYS CURRENTLY LESS

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FORTUNATE THAN THEIR AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS. THIS WAS A PROBLEM WHICH WAS LIKELY TO SURFACE IN A MEETING OF JEWISH GROUPS SCHEDULED TO TAKE PLACE IN GENEVA IN JULY, 1975.

4. IN CONCLUDING, FERENCZ SAID HE COULD NOT PREDICT DR. GOLDMANN'S REACTION TO THE FOREGOING BUT THAT FERENCZ HIMSELF FELT UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO MOVE FORWARD IN SOME WAY BEFORE OTHER MATERIAL CLAIMS WERE BROACHED BY AMERICAN FIRMS AND OTHERS.

WE INDICATED THAT WE THOUGHT AN APPROACH BY OTHER AMERICAN CLAIMANTS WOULD BE PUT OFF FOR SOME TIME IN VIEW OF THE DECISION TO ADJUDICATE THESE CLAIMS. FERENCZ THEN ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR AMBASSADOR COOPER TO MENTION TO AMBASSADOR SIEBER, WHO IS CURRENTLY ON LEAVE IN BERLIN, THE DIFFICULTY WHICH THE JEWISH CONFERENCE IS HAVING IN ARRANGING A MEETING BETWEEN GOLDMANN AND HONECKER. WE INDICATED THIS WAS A POSSIBILITY AND THAT IF SUCH AN APPROACH TOOK PLACE, WE WOULD INFORM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE. THE BASIS FOR FERENCZ MAKING SUCH A REQUEST APPEARS TO BE THE FACT THAT AMBASSADOR SIEBER HAS DECLINED TO BECOME INVOLVED IN THE SUBJECT OF JEWISH MATERIAL CLAIMS ON THE BASIS THAT THE SUBJECT IS ALREADY UNDER DISCUSSION WITH THE ANTI-FASCIST COMMITTEE IN BERLIN. COOPER

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